YOUR CHRIST IS TOO SMALL

Jurgen O. Schulz

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Compiled by

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Dedicated to my wife

The woman who has followed me beyond what is reasonable—and even further.

She has loved me more than I ever deserved—and then some.

She lets God show up in her life, and it is wonderful to behold.

She has walked by my side in the journey of discovering that Jesus is greater and far more wonderful than we ever imagined.

Beloved Wendy, this is for you.

Foreword

Years ago I read a quote that stuck in my mind: "The minute we begin to get away from Jesus Himself, we begin to cloud our theology." A profound truth, but one that took a lot of time to process in my life. For many years I was preoccupied with the peripheral. Many side issues grabbed my attention and I majored on one after another, before finally wearing each one out. I was focused on the fringe. Eventually God turned my attention away from the marginal back to the centre, and I rediscovered the majestic wonder of Jesus Christ. It was breathtaking. It was like coming home. My heart took flight, and I found myself, as the song says, "filled with his goodness, lost in his love."

The Bible affirms regarding Christ, "in Him all things hold together" (Col. 1:17). When we get our eyes off Him, not only our theology—everything falls apart.

Marriages end up on the rocks; churches go to pieces; life comes apart. The universe does not function well apart from Him. It is only "in Him" that things hold together.

I believe that God is calling His people back to the Centrality of Christ. We have been denomination centered, doctrine centered, experience centered. God's declared purpose is "to gather together in one all things in Christ" (Eph. 1:10). He would have us Christ centered.

The present book is compilation of quotes drawn from a wide variety of sources, authors and theological perspectives. However diverse, almost all the writers cited share a common focus and a mutual attraction to the core issue: The Lord Jesus Christ. They remind us that it's all about Him.

Oswald Chambers said, "I think if I have an ambition it is that I might have honorable mention in anyone's personal relationship with our Lord Jesus Christ." Similarly, if the following material encourages some to turn their eyes to Jesus, I will feel well recompensed.

So read on. Reflect. Enjoy. And, as you do, may you find that everything else grows "strangely dim in the light of His glory and grace."

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The Lord Jesus Christ

cannot be reduced to . . .

- **WORDS**
  -The "unspeakable gift" is beyond description
- **DOCTRINE**
  -His "unsearchable riches" defy definition
- **TRUTH**
  -He is a living Person, not a proposition
- **PRINCIPLES**
  -He is the living personification of all virtue
- **MORALITY**
  -Our standard is not a code but a Character
- **RELIGION**
  -He did not come to bring religion but Life
- **THEOLOGY**
  -He is the living display of God's personality
- **SYSTEMS**
  -All attempts to contain Him fail miserably
- **THE BIBLE**
  -The written Word sheds light; He IS the light

1

Your Christ is too peripheral

Everything comes from HIM;
Everything happens through HIM
Everything ends up in HIM.
Always glory!
Always praise!

ROMANS 11:36 (The Message)

I think the minute we begin to get away from **Jesus Himself,** we begin to cloud our theology.

-Anonymous

Christianity
is Christ;
and we ruin our
religion if we
centre it
anywhere else.

-James S. Stewart

In the New Testament
Jesus upstages
everyone else. He is not
only the center
of the Gospel; He is the
whole Gospel.
He is the
Good News.

-Brennan Manning

Beware of
a religion in which
Christ is not
the first foremost,
chief, principal
object,—the
very Alpha
in the alphabet of
your faith.

-J. C. Ryle

The message
of Christ is not
Christianity.
The message
of Christ is
Christ.

-Gary Amirault

The good news
of the gospel
is not an announcement
or a proclamation,
it's a Person:
Jesus the Christ.
Jesus is
the gospel.

-Leonard Sweet

JESUS Christ . . . walked into time and quietly divided it into before and after—B.C. and A.D. He walked into the realm of thought and altered all our conceptions about God and life and destiny. He walked into our moral conceptions and codes, and now we are good or bad according to whether we embody His spirit or not. He walked into the chaos of human relationships and projected a Kingdom which is destined to gather all our chaos into cosmos, to be the goal and end of all human history.

-E. Stanley Jones

The central fact
of the universe and
the perfect
encyclopedia of
all moral and
spiritual truth
is in Christ,
the Incarnate Word,
the Lamb slain, the
ascended King.

-Alexander MacLaren

Christianity
without Christ is
a chest without
a treasure,
a frame without
a portrait,
a corpse without
breath.

-John R. W. Stott

This is a reason
for much of the
powerlessness of our
churches today;
we have converted
people to the church,
to our doctrines, to
our projects and
organizations—
to almost
anything but
Christ Himself.

-Rick Joyner

God has nothing
for His Church beyond
who Christ is
in Himself.
He is sufficient,
He is superior,
He is sovereign,
He is supreme,
and He is the
summation
of all God has for us.

-David Bryant

IT IS THE
NATURE OF
CHRIST
TO BE THE
CENTER.

-Dietrich Bonhoeffer

THERE is nothing in the Gospels more significant than the way in which Jesus deliberately places Himself at the very centre of His message. He does not say with other teachers, "the truth is everything, I am nothing"; He declares, "I am the truth." He does not . . . suggest answers to the world's enigmas; He claims to be the answer — "Come unto Me, and I will give you rest." He does not offer the guidance of a code or a philosophy to keep men right through the uncertainties of an unknown future; He says, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

-James S. Stewart

Christianity
does not exist
for a moment
or in any respect
apart from
Christ.

-Karl Barth

THE story is told that when Ghatama Buddha was dying . . . some of his disciples asked how they could best remember him. He told them not to bother; that it was his teaching, not his person, that mattered. Such is the basis of religion — ideological, philosophical, educative belief-systems. Such is not the case with Jesus Christ and Christianity. Everything centers in Him. Everything is inherent in Jesus, His Person and His continuing activity. Everything functions only by the dynamic of the risen and living Lord Jesus Christ.

-James A. Fowler

FUNDAMENTALLY, our Lord's message was Himself. He did not come merely to preach a Gospel; He himself is that Gospel. He did not come merely to give bread; He said, "I am the bread." He did not come merely to shed light; He said, "I am the light." He did not come merely to show the door; He said, "I am the door." He did not come merely to name a shepherd; He said,"I am the shepherd." He did not come merely to point the way; He said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life."

-J. Sidlow Baxter

HE was asked once by a Hindu professor what it was that he had found in Christianity . . . that he had not found in his old religion. "I have found Christ," said Sadhu Sundar Singh. "Oh yes, I know," said the professor rather impatiently. "But what particular doctrine have you found or principle that you did not have before?"

"The particular thing I have found," replied Sadhu Sundar Singh, "is Christ."

-John R. W. Stott

DETACH Christianity from Christ, and it vanishes before your eyes into intellectual vapor . . . Christianity is not existent apart from Christ; it centers in Christ; it radiates now, as at the first from Christ . . . it perishes outright when men attempt to abstract it from the Living Person of its founder.

-H. P. Liddon

Everything
"Christian"
is derived from the
Being and activity of Jesus.
All of Christianity is
contingent and dependent
on Him, and
expressive of Him.
Christianity is
Christ!

-James A. Fowler

The prerogative of our Christian faith, **the secret of its strength** is this, that all it has, and all which it offers, **is laid up in a person**… that it has a **Christ** as its **middle** point...

-Author Unknown

Christianity
is not a dedication
to a system
of rules or of thought,
but a dedication
to a Person.
This is unique among the
religions of the world.

-William Temple

We have instructed
the church in nearly
everything but becoming
disciples of
Jesus Christ.
We have filled people
with doctrines
instead of Deity;
we have given them
manuals instead of
Emmanuel.

-Francis Frangipagne

If I am to know God, I will
know Him through Jesus.
If I am to gain knowledge,
it is deposited in Jesus.
If I am to have wisdom,
I will find it in Jesus.
If God dwells in me, it is
because Jesus dwells in me.
If I wish to study God,
I must study Jesus.
If the Holy Spirit is active
in my life, I will hear Him
speak of Jesus.

-Gayle D. Erwin

To be
Christians
is to live our lives
through, on, in,
under, unto, for and
like Jesus Christ,
and Christ then
becomes the
center of
our lives.

-John R. W. Stott

2

Your Christ is too doctrinal

You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of ME.

JOHN 5:39

It is Christ Himself, not the Bible, who is the true word of God. The Bible, read in the right spirit and with the guidance of good teachers, will bring us to Him. We must not use the Bible as a sort of encyclopedia out of which texts can be taken for use as weapons.

-C. S. Lewis

The Scriptures
should be read
with the aim of
finding Christ
in them. Whoever turns
aside from this object,
even though he wears him-
self out all his life in learning,
he will never reach
the knowledge
of the truth.

-John Calvin

Hundreds of people
today are devoting themselves to phases of truth, to causes.
Jesus Christ never
asks us to devote ourselves to a cause or a creed;
He asks us
to devote ourselves
to Him absolutely,
and take up that
cross daily.

-Oswald Chambers

THERE was one mistake into which the early Church was never in any danger of falling. In those early days men never thought of Jesus Christ as a figure in a book... They did not think of Him as someone who had been but as someone who is. They did not think of Jesus Christ as someone whose teaching must be discussed and debated and argued about; they thought of Him as someone whose presence could be enjoyed and whose constant fellowship could be experienced. Their faith was not founded on a book; their faith was founded on a person.

-William Barclay

God did not just
just reveal factual data,
informational propositions
of a belief-system
of doctrine or theology,
but He "revealed
His Son..."
(Gal. 1:12).

-James A. Fowler

One of the primary
schemes of the devil
is to turn the Bible into the
Tree of Knowledge
for us, instead of the
Tree of Life.
He is seeking to make it
law to us rather than a
revelation of Christ,
in whom alone
life is found.

-Rick Joyner

"And the Word
became flesh."
Without this verse the
Christian faith is the
Word become word —
an idea, a philosophy,
a moralism; with it
the Christian faith
is the Word become flesh,
a fact—a Redemptive Fact,
the Supreme Fact.

-E. Stanley Jones

They (the early Christians) did not say, "This is the truth: we will learn it, and it will instruct us." They said, "This is the Lord: we have waited for Him, and He will save us."

-E. Stanley Jones

The historical
JESUS
is himself the
embodiment
of truth...

-John R. W. Stott

THIS tendency to transform the work of the Living God into a philosophical doctrine is the constant temptation of theology, and their greatest disloyalty when they transform the action of the Spirit which brings forth fruit in themselves into an ethic, a new law, into principles which only have to be 'applied.'

-Jacques Ellul

The Word became flesh— and then through theologians it became words again.

-Karl Barth

THE so-called "church fathers" of the first few centuries of Christianity . . . reduced Christianity into moralistic and ethical religious rules and into creedalistic concepts of correct content of thought. They so quickly let go of the dynamic life of Jesus Christ as the essence of Christianity, and allowed it to become merely a belief system.

-James A. Fowler

The One who
is the way, the truth
and the life . . .
will not be reduced
to our logical
categories
and intellectual
formulas.

-Tony Campolo

THE break of Christianity with Christ, turning Him into the Word become word, was the most disastrous break possible. For it gave up the one thing in Christianity that makes it unique—the Word become flesh. All the other faiths have the Word become word, but only the Christian faith has the Word become flesh.

-E. Stanley Jones

The essence of
Christianity
is not a standardized
belief-system.
The essence
of Christianity
is not a consensus
of doctrine...
Jesus Christ
is the essence
of Christianity.

-James A. Fowler

Few were as
careless
of orthodox
formulas
as Jesus.

-C. K. Barrett

I AM not such a fool as to run amuck against theology, as some people in this day do. But what I wish to insist upon is that the first form of Christianity is not a theory, but a history, and that the revelation of God is the biography of a man.

-Alexander MacLaren

The doctrinal statement of Christianity, which is the verbal expression of the Living Truth, may have been mistaken for the Truth itself.

-Wesley W. Nelson

Those who
have succeeded in
defining doctrine
most closely
have lost Christ
most completely.

-James A. Stewart

PHYSICIANS are in constant danger of becoming calloused to suffering, lawyers are in danger of cynicism about justice, and those of us who think and talk and read and write about God are in danger of having the very words we use about God separate us from God, the most damning deformation of all.

-Eugene Peterson

THE trouble with "the faith once for all delivered to the saints" interpreters is that they contend for their interpretation as "the faith once for all delivered to the saints." They confound the Incarnation with their interpretation of it. They have the Incarnation neatly tied up in a package of statements about it and they contend for that package . . . But Jesus may have stepped out beyond the web of their own words long ago. The Word is always bigger than our words. Paul calls Jesus the "unspeakable gift"—you can't speak Him completely. In the end you have to kneel in adoration at the Wonder of the Word.

-E. Stanley Jones

THE OBJECT
OF FAITH
IS NOT
THE TEACHING
BUT THE
TEACHER.

-Soren Kierkegaard

It is possible to be
exact and correct
in your doctrine and
to be perfectly dead.
Whatever may be
the need of the recovery
of lost truth,
the need over all...
is the recovery of spiritual
revelation as to
the Lord Jesus,
to see Him anew.

-T. Austin-Sparks

Beyond the sacred page
I seek thee, Lord;
My spirit pants for thee,
O Living Word!

-Mary Lathbury

3

Your Christ is too institutional

The Church is Christ's body,
in which he speaks and acts,
by which he fills everything
with his presence.

EPHESIANS 1:23 (The Message)

In conversion
you are not attached
primarily to an order,
nor to an institution,
nor a movement,
nor a set of beliefs, nor a
code of action —
you are attached primarily
to a Person,
and secondarily to these
other things.

-E. Stanley Jones

SCHOLARS of Church History have indicated that the concept of orthodoxy was introduced into Christendom, not in the 1st Century, but early in the 4th Century, under the leadership of the Roman emperor Constantine. He desired a unified Christianity as a state religion, in order to consolidate his own power.

-Daniel Andersen

All the wretched
mess that exists
in the organization of
Christianity today . . .
is because something
specific in itself,
either a movement,
a mission, a teaching,
a testimony, a fellowship,
has taken the place
of Christ.

-T. Austin Sparks

Christianity
appeals
to all nations,
races and
creeds, but you
have made it so
ecclesiastical
that it appeals to
nobody.

-Rabindranath Tagore

It is a tragic misrepresentation of the Church when the basis of our commonality is calculated by doctrinal agreement, rather than the indwelling Lord Jesus.

-James A. Fowler

The substance and form of Christianity for very many is not the original, deep, heart-relatedness but is a tradition, a creation by men, a product of history, a crystallized system.

-T. Austin-Sparks

YOU can sketch a fairly accurate picture of the history of the Church like this: God gave a wonderful fresh breath of Holy Spirit life (on the day of Pentecost, and repeatedly, during renewal down the centuries) and man comes along and says, "Wonderful! Now, let's set up a Church preservation Society to keep things going." And he begins to organize a new denomination, a new fellowship, a different structure, fresh rules and regulations and activities, during which the Holy Spirit quietly (and often unnoticed) makes his departure. Does this new forward looking framework collapse overnight? Not a bit of it! It goes on, year after year, even century after century—the world's counterfeit of the real thing.

-David Watson

Great truths were restored to the church through every previous revival. Many of these truths were carried to extremes and error because the church allowed them to become the focal point in place of the only One upon Whom we must keep our attention.

-Rick Joyner

PRACTICES and perspectives of Christianity separate from the Person of Christ eventually turn malignant. When principles about Him are isolated from Him... we eventually find ourselves with nothing to offer the world. You cannot have a kingdom without a King.

-Fawn Parish

MOST denominations originated with a genuine move of the Spirit which imparted truth to the church. These truths were meant to lead the church closer to Jesus, and unquestionably this was accomplished for many. However, with each of these movements there have always been people who never saw beyond the truth itself. They began to build their towers around the truths, rather than seeing them as mere stepping stones to The Truth. These towers have now become many of the denominations scattered across the spiritual landscape of Christianity.

-Rick Joyner

IN the beginning the Church was a **fellowship** of men and women who centered their lives on the living Christ. They had a personal and vital **relationship** to the Lord. It transformed them and the world around them. Then the Church moved to Greece, and it became a **philosophy.** Later it moved to Rome, and it became an **institution.** Next it moved to Europe and it became a **culture.** Finally it moved to America, and it became an **enterprise.** We've got far too many churches and so few **fellowships.**

-Richard Halverson

Nearly every denomination or movement seems to develop a particular slant or system of traditions, some of which ultimately obscure the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ.

-Francis Frangipagne

Many who should be
disciples of Jesus
today are still only
disciples of... a reformer,
a religious group or
even an idea [that]
has displaced
their loyalty to
Jesus Christ.

-Geoffrey T. Bull

Our little systems
have their day,
They have their day
and cease to be ;
They are but broken
lights of Thee,
And Thou, O Lord,
art more than they.

-Author Unknown

WHAT am I going to work for? Am I going to work to try to establish some society, some denomination, or some 'undenomination,' to win a place for a teaching, or an interpretation, or a system of truth? Is it to some THING that I am devoted, or is it to secure for the Lord Jesus His absolute centrality and supremacy?

-T. Austin-Sparks

Beware of anything that competes with loyalty to Jesus Christ.

-Oswald Chambers

AS long as religion was denominational-centric God could not trust us with power. Had he done so, it would have run into a denominational megalo-mania . . . But if religion is Christ-centric, if to be a Christian is to be Christlike, to catch his mind and Spirit, then I think God can back that with power to the utmost . . . God can trust us with power here.

-E. Stanley Jones

What is true of all organizations, buildings, individual people, and the whole of creation is true of churches: They exhibit life when they are defined by and live out of a center rather than when they are defined by and live on the perimeter.

-Gregory A. Boyd

Judaism was a fold,
a circumference
without a center,
but Christianity is a flock,
where we have a
center without a
circumference. We
have no wall about us, but
we are gathered
around Him, our
Good Shepherd.

-H. A. Ironside

THE church is the church when it's all about the Initiator, the Originator, the Instigator, the Sacrificial Lamb of the Church. There is no other focal point, no other reason, no other point, no other motivation, no other structure... just the Person of Jesus living His life through His people...

-Sojourner magazine

The church has only this task: to embody Christ, manifest His nature, demonstrate God's love to the world and proclaim His Lordship over all things.

-Manfred Haller

If we are the Body
Why aren't His arms reaching
Why aren't His hands healing
Why aren't His words teaching

And if we are the Body
Why aren't His feet going
Why is His love not showing
there is a way.

-Casting Crowns

The Church
is the
representation
and continuation
of Christ.

-Adolph Saphir

No assembly,
no church,
no movement,
no testimony,
no fellowship
is justified in
its existence
from God's standpoint
except insofar as
Christ is
expressed by it.

-T. Austin-Sparks

Christianity is always and only the dynamic expression of the life of Jesus Christ in the Christian, individually and collectively.

-James A. Fowler

4

Your Christ is too religious

For in Christ, neither our most conscientious religion nor disregard of religion amounts to anything. What matters is something far more interior: faith expressed in love.

GALATIANS 5:6 (The Message)

You did not
receive a religion
about Jesus,
but the actual
Person
of Jesus.

-Francis Frangipagne

His aim was
never to give us a
new religion in order
that we might live a bit
more decently–
in that case Moses and
his law would have
sufficed.

-Christopher Blumhardt

God
is not
interested in
religion.

-William Temple

Take one look
at church history and
you will see that
Christianity needs
to hear the message of
Jesus as much
as or more than
most religions.

-Bruxy Cavey

Jesus
calls men,
not to a
new religion,
but to life.

-Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Religion
is a satanic
counterfeit
of a relation-
ship with God.

-Robert Heidler

Religious sin is the only sin Jesus publicly confronted.

-Gregory A. Boyd

There are a thousand ways of being religious without submitting to Christ's lord ship, and people are practiced in most of them.

-Eugene Peterson

Satan is not,
as men suppose,
the instigator
of their crimes.
Religion is the
special sphere
of his influence.

-Sir Robert Anderson

Men never
do evil so
completely
and cheerfully as
when the do it from
religious
conviction.

-Blaise Pascal

CHRISTIANITY as a religion is no better than Islam or Buddhism or Hinduism or any other man made religion. It is not Christendom that changes lives or changes history. It is the movement that Jesus began through his death and resurrection.

-Erwin Raphael McManus

The essence of the
religious spirit
is getting life from
being truer and more
righteous than others,
rather than
getting life
from God alone.
It is living from the
perimeter rather
than the
center.

-Gregory A. Boyd

Rule 1: Don't have anything wrong with you.
Rule 2: If you do, get over it quickly.
Rule 3: If you can't get over it quickly, then fake it.
Rule 4: If you can't get over it quickly or fake it, then stay way from me. I don't want anyone to think I have it too.

Is it any wonder that people do not grow and cannot find healing in that kind of environment? Jesus offers us so much more.

-Brian Dodd

It is a profound irony that the Son of God visited this planet and one of the chief complaints against him was that he was not religious enough.

-Rebecca M. Pippert

Our life is not to be found in our correct doctrine or in our piety, as important as these are. To get life from these is religion. Our life is rather to be found in Jesus Christ, and in Jesus Christ alone.

-Gregory A. Boyd

Religion…
is the attempted
replacement
of the divine
work by a
human
manufacture.

-Karl Barth

TO summarize church history in a crass, but not altogether inaccurate, way... Jesus came with the message "Religion is redundant. God has gone out of the religion business and he wants you to experience everything you turned to religion for—forgiveness, salvation, instruction—through me." And his followers said, "Wow. What a cool idea. We should build a religion out of that!" And they did.

-Bruxy Cavey

IF all of our worth is found in Christ, and if we trust that this worth is unsurpassable, there is simply no extra worth to be gotten by such things as looking good, acting religious, or being successful.

-Gregory A. Boyd

Religion shifts
our focus off
Jesus Christ
and places it on
ourselves and how
well we are or aren't
performing.

-Steve McVey

GOD is not interested in religion, but He is tremendously interested in life. You cannot read the New Testament without realizing that the Lord Jesus did not care a whit for the Sabbath regulations of his day when they were set against the need of a broken man for healing. God is not interested in stained glass windows, organ solos, congregation hymns or even pastoral prayers half so much as he is in producing love filled homes, generous hearts and brave men and women who can live right in midst of the world and keep their heads and hearts undefiled.

-Ray Stedman

We need to ask
forgiveness from
God, from the world,
for being religious.
We have striven to be
religious when we
were called to
be loving.

-Gregory A. Boyd

BELIEVE in a secular Christ. I do not believe in a religious Christ. I believe one of the whole difficulties of Christianity is we've put Christ in a special building for a special occasion, with special forms of worship, special music, special everything. Cut the special out; put your hands in your pocket and go in your old blue jeans. Christ is a secular person.

-Norman Grubb

Many a soul begins
to come to God
when he flings off
being religious,
because there is only
one Master
of the human heart, and
and that is not religion
Jesus Christ.

-Oswald Chambers

RELIGION . . . is a loser, a strictly fallen activity. It has a failed past and a bankrupt future. There was no religion in Eden and there won't be any in heaven; and in the meantime Jesus has died and risen to persuade us to knock it all off right now.

-Robert Capon

RELIGION is managed spirituality—an attempt to make people feel better about themselves without helping them discover the reality of their own friendship with the Living God. It is man's attempt to do God's work.

-Wayne Jacobsen

THE very credentials these people are waving around as something special, I'm tearing up and throwing out with the trash—along with everything else I used to take credit for. And why? Because of Christ. Yes, all the things I once though were so important are gone from my life. Compared to the high privilege of knowing Christ Jesus as my Master, firsthand, everything I once thought I had going for me is insignificant—dog dung. I've dumped in all in the trash so that I could embrace Christ and be embraced him . . . I gave up all that inferior stuff so I could know Christ personally.

-Paul the Apostle (The Message)

5

Your Christ is too sectarian

Is Christ divided?

1 CORINTHIANS 1:13

Disunity in
the Body of Christ
is the scandal
of the ages.
The greatest sin
of the Church is not
lying, stealing, drunken-
ness, adultery—not
even murder—
but the sin of
disunity.

-Paul E. Billheimer

The basis of our fellowship is not around this doctrine, that doctrine, the other doctrine; or around this group, that group, or the other group. It is around Christ and only around Christ.

-E. Stanley Jones

Christ is our unity,
not dogmas, not polities,
not rituals: our oneness
is a oneness of life.
We need for our centre no
tower with a top reaching
to heaven, we have a
living Lord who
is with us, and in Him,
we being many,
are one.

-Alexander MacLaren

We do not make a creed, but Christ the ground and term of union.

-John Nelson Darby

My fellowship
is not concerned so much
with what I hold but with
Who holds me.
Not so much with a creed
but with the Christ.
It rests not so much
in an agreement
on the doctrine
of redemption but
in a common
interlock with
the Redeemer.

-Geoffrey T. Bull

Unity does not come from believing the the same thing but from trusting the same person.

-Mike Wells

ONE might think that, with the Bible as the center of Christianity, the unity of Christians could be easily realized. But unfortunately this has not proved true, though we can consider it fortunate indeed that, as this inability to unify proves, the letter of the Bible cannot really replace the living Christ as the center of our faith.

-Kokichi Kurosaki

The position
I have ever maintained,
of union with the
whole circle
of God's redeemed,
without exclusive
attachment to
any section
of it is daily more
precious
in my eyes.

-Anthony Norris Groves

ONE obstacle we must overcome is the illusion that we, because of our ability to "rightly divide the word," are more spiritual than those in other churches. This deception infects churches across the board. Consequently, we remain divided, kept in isolation by our own spiritual pride, never discerning that the enemy has the church down the street similarly thinking they are more spiritual than us.

-Francis Frangipagne

So long as we judge Christ to be dwelling with a person, that is our warrant for receiving him.

-Anthony Norris Groves

The plagues of controversy and division and weakness will be largely lifted when and get back to the center—Christ.

-E. Stanley Jones

That is the
bond of union
—that we
belong to Christ.
One with
Christ—that is
the great bond
to keep
before us.

-George Mueller

The problem
of unity
will be well on the way
to solution if the . . .
church makes
Christ central
and all else
marginal.

-E. Stanley Jones

When other issues
are allowed to polarize
those for whom
Christ is Lord,
that issue, whatever it is,
is elevated to
a position of greater
importance than
Christ Himself.

-Richard Halverson

Whenever the
periphery
is in danger of
displacing
the center,
we are not far
removed from
idolatry.

-D. A. Carson

Whatever
you make
the issue,
you make
the idol.

-Author Unknown

To speak plainly . . .
it is not different opinions,
nor a difference in judgment
about revealed truths,
nor a different practice in
sacred administrations, but
pride, self-interest,
love of honour, reputation,
and dominion . . . that are
the true cause
of that defect of
evangelical unity.

-John Owen

I am persuaded the more the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts, the more all narrowness of spirit will subside and give way.

-George Whitefield

UNTIL I can learn to see my brother's faults as a mere mote compared with the reality of the Lord living in Him and on the other hand see my own critical and negative reaction to him as a great wooden beam of sin in myself, I shall never find the key to unity . . .

-Norman Grubb

I HAVE come to a fixed conclusion: the issue is simply Jesus Christ . . . He is the hub, but too many of us are out on our favorite spokes like owls on different limbs. When we stand at the hub all the spokes are ours. And the closer we are to the hub the closer we are to all the spokes!

-Vance Havner

The Father
has decreed that
Christ's Church
shall be united.
His Son has purchased it,
and the Holy Spirit
is here to establish it.
The battle you are facing
is a distraction;
the real issue is to
maintain the oneness
of Christ.

-Francis Frangipagne

Sectarianism is essentially a failure... to embrace in our affections all who belong to Christ.

-Author unknown

One church. *One* faith. *One* Lord. Not Baptist, not Methodist, not Adventist.

Just Christians.

No denominations.
No hierarchies.
No traditions.

Just Christ.

-Max Lucado

A BRITISH nobleman preaching the gospel in Sweden some years ago was asked by a lady what church he belonged to. "To the Church of Christ" was his reply. "Yes, but to what branch?" she insisted. "Madam, I do not belong to any branch. I belong to the Trunk."

6

Your Christ is too trivial

For some men, straying from these things, have turned aside to fruitless discussion...

1 TIMOTHY 1:6 NASB

How many leaders have saddled their pet peeves, drawn their swords of bitterness and launched into battle against brethren over issues that are not worth discussing?

-Max Lucado

IN the present decade, preoccupation with styles of worship—traditional or renewed, organ or guitar, hymns or choruses, incense or balloons, recited or spontaneous prayers, old or new translations of the Bible—have upstaged the central drama of Calvary and Easter morning. Styles overshadow substance, form transcends content, the Church supplants Jesus.

-Brennan Manning

All these petty
little things that
divide the heart of the
saints is merely giving
ammunition to
the hosts of evil and
weakening the
spiritual power
of the saints.

-Harold St. John

If we do not keep
our attention
upon the ultimate
purpose of God,
we will continually
be distracted
by the lesser
purposes of God.

-Mike Bickle

We are often
distracted
from the River of Life
by the little
tributaries
that feed it.

-Rick Joyner

THE Jerusalem leaders came near to smothering the gospel in the beginning. It was Paul who loosed it from its Jewish fetters. He dared follow the living Christ into the heart of paganism. He came back and told what God had wrought. The Jerusalem leaders... drew up some of the things considered essential for the Christians among Gentiles... "to abstain from things strangled and from blood." Binding up the gospel of Christ with that! Of course it dropped away, for the gospel was at grips with bigger issues. It may be that to future Christians some of the things that we consider essential in our systems will seem just as absurd as this does to us.

-E. Stanley Jones

The problem with the church today is not corruption. It is not institutionalism. No, the problem is far more serious than some thing like the minister running away with the organist. The problem is pettiness. Blatant pettiness.

-Mike Yaconelli

The sensitivity
of men to
small matters
and their indifference
to great ones,
indicates a
strange
inversion.

-Blaise Pascal

THE apostolic letters . . . seek to redirect the saints back onto Christ and away from a myriad of things seeking to rob them of their time, energy, attention, focus, and spiritual devotion... They became entangled in many things. The whole controversy of Jews and Gentiles; to be circumcised, or not to be circumcised; to marry, or to remain single; to keep the Sabbath, or not to keep the Sabbath; which foods to eat, and which foods not to eat; whether one should follow Peter, or Paul, or Apollos; to speak in tongues, or not to speak in tongues; how men should behave, and how women should behave... On and on it went, and on and on it still goes today... We do not need more of the Lord, since we are already complete in Christ — we just need less of everything else.

-Chip Brogden

The main thing
is to keep
the main thing
the main
thing.

-Stephen R. Covey

Let me give you some real mischiefs: living for show, losing the whole in the particulars, indulgence of vital powers in trivialities.

-Ralph Waldo Emerson

IT is time the church quit pretending that pettiness doesn't matter. Pettiness has become a serious disease in the Church of Jesus Christ, a disease which continues to result in terminal cases of discord, disruption, and destruction.

-Mike Yaconelli

PERHAPS you've heard about the farmer who was out working in his field. He saw a mouse and that angered him. So he took his hoe and began to go after that mouse. He spent the next thirty minutes chasing and beating at that mouse and finally he killed it. Then he looked back and realized he had wrecked an acre of his crops.

-Warren Wiersbe

As long as we
in a small-minded way
put what is individual
and isolated in the
foreground, we are
torn by untruthfulness
and confusion. We are in
conflict. We lose ourselves
in superficialities.
We persist in folly.
We remain in death.

-Eberhard Arnold

Nothing is more unworthy of a wise man or ought to trouble him more than to have allowed more time for trifling useless things than they deserve.

-Plato

Look at things largely and don't spend your life playing with pieces of scaffolding.

-Harold St. John

How many
pulpit hours
have been
wasted on
preaching the
trivial?

-Max Lucado

WE patter of into arguments about predestination; we wool-gather in the third heaven; we digress into conjectures about the atonement; we divert ourselves by counting miracles or collecting grammatical oddities. And then St. John's vision interrupts us. We are startled out of our woolgathering digressions, our tangential arguments, our inattentive diversions. Our imaginations are kindled with a vision—of Christ. We are roused, attentive, alert. Everything suddenly is in proportion. Christ is the last word... This is the goal towards which everything is aimed... The Revelation gives us the last word on Christ, and the word is that Christ is the center and at the center.

-Eugene Peterson

Things which
matter most
must never
be at the mercy
of things which
matter least.

-Johann W. Goethe

MAY the Lord keep you from entering into the curious questions at home. I believe these subjects which cause such contention are really like small dust on a scale, in comparison with the preservation of love and harmony in Christ's body.

-From a letter by Anthony Norris Groves to his wife, 1849

WHEN we are concentrated upon the primary purposes of God the secondary purposes will then serve the one. If our eye is single, on Him, then the whole body will be full of light. If our eye is not single but divided into the many secondary purposes, it will become darkness instead of light. Even though they may be truths they will still deceive us; they will become distorted and extreme if our focus is not on the Lord Himself.

-Rick Joyner

There are an infinity of angles at which one falls, only one at which one stands.

-G. K. Chesterton

THERE is only one safe and sure center of Christian experience, doctrine and testimony and that is Jesus Christ. Stand at any other point, no matter how good, and you will become lopsided. Stand with Him and you keep your balance, for by Him all things consist.

-Vance Havner

From a proud doctor of theology, from a contentious pastor, and from useless questions, may God deliver his Church.

-Martin Luther

Gentlemen,
for the love of
God, let us buy
big maps.

-Lord Salisbury

7

Your Christ is too finite

Christ . . . gives us
the best picture of God
we'll ever get.

2 CORINTHIANS 1:6 (The Message)

Jesus Christ Himself is the final exegesis of all truth. He is all that we need to know about God.

-Major W. Ian Thomas

The Revelation of God is not a book or a doctrine, but a living Person.

-Emil Brunner

Wisdom,
God's blueprint
for humans, at last
herself becomes
human.
The Shekinah
turns out to have a
human face.

-N. T. Wright

Jesus Christ
is the singular
essence and
expression of the
gospel, of the
revelation of God,
of Christianity,
of the Church...

-James A. Fowler

JESUS
IS GOD
LIVED BY
MAN.

-Frederick Godet

He [Jesus] is
the living,
concrete,
embodied
picture of
God.

-Gregory A. Boyd

HERE'S the statement that I recommend you chew on a little bit: GOD IS JESUS. When you see Jesus, you are seeing God, not just because Jesus is God, but also because God is Jesus. Jesus is the One who shows us who God is and what God is like.

-Trevin Wax

Jesus
was God's
exact
replica.

-Philip Yancey

I believe in the God whose exact imprint is on display gurgling in the manger, arguing in the Temple, bleeding on the cross. I believe in the God made known in Jesus...

-N. T. Wright

Jesus is
God simplified,
God approachable,
God understandable,
God lovable.
When I say "God"
I think Jesus.
And nothing higher can
be thought or said!
Jesus is the last
word that can be said
about God.

-E. Stanley Jones

In Jesus,
God lay down on the
dissection table,
as it were,
stretched out
in cruciform posture for
the scrutiny
of all skeptics who
have ever lived.

-Philip Yancey

Jesus is
the Word of God.
He is not
the best Word.
He is not
the ultimate Word.
He is not
the seal of series of
improving words.
He is the
Word.

-Author unknown

An old Chinese scholar,
after listening
for the first time to the
story of the loving,
sacrificing God,
exclaimed to his neighbor,
*"Didn't I tell you
there ought to be a
God like that?"*

-E. Stanley Jones

There are many things
we can't explain.
However now we have
an explanation
of God's nature—
Jesus Christ.
There need never
be confusion
about Him again.

-Eugenia Price

Let Jesus
define
who God is.
Not
your dad,
not
your peers.

-Gregory A. Boyd

I know of
no God other
than the one
called Jesus
Christ.

-Martin Luther

God's total explanation of Himself to man is Jesus Christ.

-Eugenia Price

Anything that one imagines of God apart from Christ is only useless thinking and vain idolatry.

-Martin Luther

If I were to sit down
to try to think out
the kind of God
I would like to see
in the universe,
for the life of me,
I couldn't think
of anything higher
than that He should be
like Christ.

-E. Stanley Jones

DO you want to know what is on the mind of God? Then look at Jesus! Do you want to know the will of God? Then look at Jesus! Do you want to know what is in the heart of God? Then look at Jesus! Jesus is the exact representation of what is on the mind and heart and in the will of God!

-Anne Graham Lotz

Your image
of God
is the single most
important
element of your
spiritual
journey.

-Graham Cooke

Jesus
came to
reveal the
true face
of God.

-Xavier A. Santamaria

The greatest news that has ever been broken to the human race is the news that God is like Christ.

-E. Stanley Jones

What makes
Christianity
Christian
is centering
in God
as known
in Jesus.

-Marcus J. Borg

ONLY to the extent that we resolve in our minds and hearts that God looks like Jesus—dying a God-forsaken death on the cross in order to open up the fellowship of the perfect, loving, triune community—can we make any progress in expressing God's love in our lives.

-Gregory A. Boyd

GEORGE Buttrick, former chaplain at Harvard, recalls that students would come into his office, plop down on a chair and declare: "I don't believe in God."

Buttrick would give this disarming reply: "Sit down and tell me what kind of God you don't believe in. I probably don't believe in that God either." And then he would talk about Jesus, the corrective to all our assumptions about God.

-Philip Yancey

8

Your Christ is too cluttered

There is only Christ . . .
He is everything.

COLOSSIANS 3:11 (Jerusalem Bible)

Our greatest
need and God's
greatest gift to us,
is to awaken us
to the sufficiency,
supremacy,
and destiny,
of the Lord
Jesus Christ.

-Fawn Parish

The one who
has Christ has
everything.
The one who has
everything except
for Christ really
has nothing.

-Augustine of Hippo

Re-state to yourself
what you believe,
then do away with
as much of it
as possible, and get
back to the bedrock
of the Cross
of Christ.

-Oswald Chambers

The risen victorious Jesus . . . was all the early Christian community had . . . That's not rhetoric; that's history. They had only Jesus and we keep thinking that we need some-thing else.

-Brennan Manning

THERE is only one relationship that matters, and that is your personal relationship to a personal redeemer and Lord. Let everything else go, but maintain that at all costs, and God will fulfill His purpose through your life.

-Oswald Chambers

God is
calling us to an
undistracted
passion for
His Son.

-Fawn Parish

I fear, lest some-
how as the serpent
deceived
Eve by his craftiness,
so your minds may
be corrupted from
the simplicity that
is in Christ.

-Paul the Apostle

We must strive
to proclaim a message that
"re-converts" Christians
back to Christ
for ALL that He
is—transforming
many, once again, into
Person-driven
disciples.

-David Bryant

IF CHRISTIANITY were merely...

-BIBLE KNOWLEDGE, the best Christians would be those who most diligently accumulated it.

-DOCTRINE, the best Christians would be those who most accurately defined it.

-THEOLOGY, the best Christians would be those who most thoroughly studied it.

-ETHICS, the best Christians would be those who most carefully practiced it.

-RELIGION, the best Christians would be those who most dutifully observed it.

IF CHRISTIANITY were merely...

-EVANGELISM, the best Christians would be those who most zealously promoted it.

SERVICE, the best Christians would be those who most tirelessly performed it.

HOLINESS, the best Christians would be those who most rigorously perfected it.

BUT CHRISTIANITY IS CHRIST, and therefore the best Christians are those know Him intimately and reflect His character.

Be Thou my vision,
O Lord of my heart
Naught be all else to me,
Save that Thou art;
Thou my best thought
By day or by night
Waking or sleeping,
Thy presence my light.

-8th Century Irish hymn

He is a path, if any be misled,
He is a robe, if any naked be,
If any chance to hunger,
He is bread,
If any be a bondman,
He is free,
If any be but weak,
How strong is He,
To dead men life He is,
To sick men health,
To blind men sight,
And to the needy wealth,
A pleasure without loss,
A treasure without stealth.

-Giles Fletcher

God cannot
give us happiness
and peace apart
from Himself
because it is not
there. There is no
such thing.

-C. S. Lewis

BACK TO JESUS ALONE

When you can't figure out whether to sit at His feet, walk in a manner worthy of His call, stand in battle, or run the race with diligence, ***It is time to get back to Jesus alone . . .***

When you can't even remember: The twenty-two characteristics of a good wife or husband, the seven steps of appeal to authority, the eight things to do when you are worried, or the nine ways of love, ***It is time to get back to Jesus alone . . .***

When you hear: it is pre, mid, post, a, or pan, don't take the "mark," it is "time, time and half a time," and you can't get through the next hour, ***It is time to get back to Jesus alone . . .***

When you hear testimonies of others: raising the dead, praying all night, fasting forty days, leading thousands to the Lord, and memorizing the entire Bible, and you hear it through someone who hasn't done any of it, ***It is time to get back to Jesus alone . . .***

When you hear: have faith, work hard, repent, conquer, give, suffer, sacrifice, evangelize, make disciples, wait on Him, walk in Him, pick up your cross, claim your possessions, and pray, and you feel pulled then different directions on a rack, ***It is time to get back to Jesus alone . . .***

-Jim May

RE you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me — watch how I do it. learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly."

-Jesus Christ - Matthew 11:28-30
(The Message)

I HAVE a dream that the centrality and supremacy of Jesus Christ will be the focus, the mainstay, and the pursuit of every Christian and every church. And that God's dear people will no longer be obsessed with spiritual and religious things to the point of division. But that their obsession and pursuit would be a person—the Lord Jesus Christ.

-Frank Viola

Jesus is all
we have;
He is all
we need and all
we want.

-Vance Havner

YES, all things I once thought were so important are gone from my life. Compared to the high privilege of knowing Christ Jesus as my Master, I've dumped it all in the trash so that I can embrace Jesus and be embraced by Him.

-Paul the Apostle

All we need
are hearts that
will not be
satisfied
with something
or someone less
than Him.

-Francis Frangipagne

We must never again allow ourselves to be distracted from the simplicity of devotion to Christ Himself.

-Rick Joyner

The End

(Although we will never get to the end of exalting His greatness.)

The Author

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